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J. H. (Joseph H.) Lamotte [Prairie du Chien, WI] to W. Beaumont [Saint Louis, MO] regarding: land speculation about Prairie du Chien, smallpox among Indians, trial of Harris. September 2, 1836

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Prairie du Chien, W.C.  
Sept 1836.

Dear Doctor,

We reached this place on the 13. ult.  
after an agreeable voyage of 4 days & I beg you to say to  
Miss Elizabeth, whose anxiety on the subject, is doubtless, exceeding great  
that, notwithstanding the difficulties of the navigation & the semi-barren  
character of the intervening country, etc; etc, etc, my baggage & I  
inseparable friends, came thus safe and sound.  
(Whether my imagination was so much elevated, by what I had heard,  
or by the contrast from the busy scenes I had just left, as to unfit me  
for judging correctly, I know not; still, my opinion is that this  
place is yet as deserving of its great name, as ever - That Prairie-  
du Chien is very nearly in the same place as when I first had the  
pleasure of beholding it - That the Sun rises over the Grand Pré and  
sets in Campbell's corner as he did when the Frenchmen first visited  
the Country. The small-pox however, has assisted old Time in his  
ordinary operations & has laid low about 30 of the Crapauds Tribe,  
100 of the Sioux & many Menom. & Winn. Indians. Rollette and his  
Sancho Panza, had it, barely escaping with their lives - their beauty  
underwent a horrible eclipse - With these exceptions, matters are  
very little above the 'Statu quo' - The mangeurs de l'or are as  
fat, ragged & black as their great-grandfathers were (if they wanted  
any), while the Indians continue to signify a preference for Savage  
Life. - Here is a list of Sales made to Speculators -  
Provost & G. Brisbois sold to Smith, Hunter, McGregor, Lockwood & <sup>ac.</sup> 150 for \$4,750  
Dousman, adj.<sup>3</sup>, to Thompson, Jones, Whitney & 21 others 150 acres for 1000 \$  
P. Boicette, next but two, to Thompson & 125 a. for \$1000 - Paquette, adj.<sup>3</sup>  
170 a. to Hunter, Lock<sup>3</sup> & 2000. (disputed title). - Rollette, adj.<sup>3</sup> to Smith, Hunter  
& 67 ac. for \$750 - Lockwood's Land comes next - then the land of Lefointe



his was sold to Thompson & Co for \$1600. 250 a. Then comes yours, Brunet  
Pollette, Sauter & Co. Government has bought Downing House  
for an agency, \$2500 - It is untenanted. Sec. Horner, who is now  
at Cassville, with his family, they say, will occupy it - (doubtful)  
One Scholz, has offered \$1500. for Bat. Lariviere's farm - He asked  
\$1800 & lost the sale - Which was the biggest - U? -

Brunet has been offered \$13,000 for his Ferry - The Whitney Co  
propose cutting a canal from this Ferry across to Corn point &  
Establishing a Ferry from the latter, across the Mississippi -  
Power, I understand offers his half breed claim for \$3000 - this  
is the best chance for Speculation that I have heard of here  
Dousman & Brunet have bought the claim of Irandon, at what  
price is unknown - they probably gave him a horse - a fiddle  
a hat band & a song (with the privilege of singing himself)  
"Well, Not-so it"? - Pollette is much harassed by his Wife  
who insists upon her dower-right & will sign no deed except with  
such stipulation - Her decision has given rise to some 'scenes' -  
But the impressions of the street-door key upon the Don's pericranium  
usually acts as a quierting or rather as a Narcotic!

Within the walls of the Fort, an awful dulness prevails - A  
coolness exists between the Col. & Cap. McKee, some say, because the  
Cap. has been in friendly correspondence during the Winter, with  
May Garland - Some say again, that it is on account of the hatred  
existing between the Cap. & D. W. - Others think that the Col. took umbrage  
at the questions asked him on Harris' trial, relative to purchases  
which he himself had made, & to orders which he had given -  
Be the cause, what it may however, all intimacy is dissolved, and  
the 'better or worse' parts, not to be out done in matter of Etiquette,  
have followed suit, - Non intercomse has been declared and visiting



among the Ladies, voted unconstitutional & formally abolished! The  
Harris trial, which continued 5 weeks, was concluded 4 days before we arrived.  
Savoy<sup>pt</sup>. Loomis - Miller, Mitchell, Plummer composed the Court, D<sup>r</sup> W. J. Advo. call.  
Burnet assisted the Prisoner - Half the halfbreeds at the Prairie and something  
more than half the people for the Mines were summoned by the Defence.  
Nothing since the Treaty of '29, has made such a stir, at this place  
(Excepting, always the Black Hawk War) - Harris was unusually severe on  
Gwynn, who appeared as a Witness - called him a pampered mendicant -  
an abject tool - a senseless dupe, with other far fetched, high flown,  
honorary epithets. Gen<sup>l</sup>. Street appeared & swore harder than was  
expected. The impression, that H. must be dismissed or that he will  
resign - S<sup>r</sup>. Polce, for too great a penchant, has been forced  
to withdraw. Col. T. has declined the appt. of Commissioner & as there  
will be no extra compensation I suppose the "God of War" will also decline.  
Old Mary - Ann is dead & Old Mr. Street has a baby 5 mo<sup>s</sup>. old! etc.

Talking about Stations, with Wood, I asked him why he did not try to get  
a Station like that at St. Louis - He replied that he was nigh getting that  
in the first place, but that now, he would not go there if he could, he believed.  
That D. B. was an old man - had a reputation H<sup>o</sup> H<sup>o</sup> - (Apropos) The  
unknown to Wood, It is rumoured that he is to be Surgeon of the 2<sup>d</sup> Dragoon  
A death-blow, if true. - Mr. Stoner has fallen into a decline -  
& they think mine will die - Dr. Emerson is courting Miss Stevens, at  
St. Peter - Should he fail there, he is to court Miss Meeks, an <sup>antiquated</sup> sister  
of Mr. Loomis; almost as large & almost as interesting! Tainter has transferred  
his land (bit of you) to Mr. Bronson - Met. preacher - He has imported about  
60. of his poor kin to till his ground - among them, one, something less than -  
28 preachers - 15 abolition - Temperance & Tract men - The rest drink  
metheglin & pale ale - Tainter keeps store in Bailly's house - The latter is  
now a merchant in Galena - at present settling the estate of his Father  
in Mackinaw. —



Give my best respects to Mrs Beaumont. I have much to say to  
Mr. Elizabeth & Sarah but they will not expect it here -

Answer this, or get them to do it (over your certificate) - You,  
Ajax-Jackson-like, shouldering all responsibility & the residue of  
the baggage, in my next! Over Yours J. H. La Motte  
[Not forgetting Cusher & Pease.]  
To, D. W. Beaumont. }

of  
Mrs Beaumont. M. &  
Dunbar & Co. Albany.  
J. H. La Motte.

Dorman says that no deed by our law is good, unless signed by 2 or more witnesses &  
that therefore the deed he gave you is not legal or binding - I found your Act. in his hands  
& he says the W. boundary begins in the division line between farm lots numbered on the  
map of priv. land claims, at Pt. du Chien, as farm lots No's 35 & 36. 1140 feet  
North, 80° East from the S. E. Corner of a lot heretofore sold & conveyed by  
J. Rollet & wife to L. P. Burnett & running thence in the direction of the alley between  
4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> streets on the plot of a Town Surveyed & laid out by J. Rollet on a  
part of the said farm-lot numbered 35, in a straight line to the division  
line between farm lots No's 36 & 37 -